

# TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **KNOX COUNTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS TO RECEIVE NEW AREA CODE; 7-DIGIT DIALING STAYS**

**NASHVILLE** -- It's official! Knox County, and the (8) counties that border Knox County will be the recipients of the state's newest area code. The decision was made during today's Tennessee Regulatory Authority's (TRA) regularly scheduled conference.

After weeks of intense speculation and concern on the part of consumers and the business community throughout East Tennessee, the "Split" option was considered the most logical choice to address the number shortage problem facing telephone subscribers in the (423) area code.

Under this option, Knox County and the eight (8) counties that border Knox County, including Anderson, Blount, Grainger, Jefferson, Loudon, Roane, Sevier, and Union, will be assigned a new area code. The Chattanooga and Tri-Cities area will retain the use of the (423) area code.

One advantage of the Split option is the continued practice of 7-digit dialing to complete local calls. The Overlay option, if selected, would have required 10-digit dialing to complete local calls.

The number of access lines or telephone subscribers in each calling area played a factor in today's decision.

"It was not an easy decision for the TRA to make," says Eddie Roberson, of the TRA's Consumer Services Division. "The decision to allow the Chattanooga and Tri-Cities areas to maintain use of (423) had to do with the *combined* number of business and residential access lines in those two calling areas versus the same number of lines in the Knoxville calling area."

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In effect, today's decision results in the least amount of disruption for all consumers.

The North American Number Plan Administration (NANPA) has estimated that sometime during the 4th Quarter of 1999, the (423) area code will exhaust.

Pending approval from Lockheed-Martin, the organization that monitors number consumption, and to allow those impacted areas ample time to prepare for the new area code, the Directors have put forth a date of October 1, 1999 as the start of the permissive dialing period.

The permissive dialing period is a period of time established by NANPA that functions as a transition period for affected areas. During this period, both the new and the old area codes are allowed for completing calls.

Mandatory dialing of the new area code will begin no sooner than February 1, 2000.

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